CLAIMS LISTING

1. (currently amended)   A method for the detection of ~~small quantities of particles by the detection of~~ antigen-antibody ~~precipitates~~ concentration which comprises:

providing a sample ~~fluid~~ that ~~essentially~~ contains ~~particles~~ antigens with a given maximum particle size, the ~~particles~~ antigens having at least two antibody binding sites;

providing a fluid containing antibodies that ~~essentially contains particles having~~ have a given maximum particle size;

contacting the sample ~~fluid~~ with the fluid containing the antibodies, which yields a reaction ~~fluid~~ mixture where in the presence of ~~particles~~ antigens having at least two antibody binding sites the antibodies can form an antigen-antibody precipitate;

directing a light beam through the reaction ~~fluid~~ mixture;

detecting a signal by measuring with a photodetector the extinction at the light-dark boundary of the cone of light that is produced when the light generated by the laser is passing through ~~the~~ a measuring cell

NPGVL1:404572.1-POA-(JTG) 025045-00015

containing the reaction ~~fluid~~ <u>mixture</u>, the signal strength depending on the size and number of antigen-antibody precipitates formed.

2. (currently amended)   <u>The</u> ~~A~~ method according to claim 1, wherein the sample ~~fluid~~ contains ~~particles~~ <u>antigens with a concentration</u> in the order of magnitude of femtograms or attograms per liter.

3. (currently amended-withdrawn)   <u>The</u> ~~A~~ method <u>of claim 1 or 2</u> ~~according to any of the preceding claims~~, wherein the step of providing a sample ~~fluid~~ that ~~essentially~~ contains ~~particles~~ <u>antigens</u> having a given maximum particle size comprises:

a) providing a ~~fluid~~ <u>liquid</u>,

introducing a sample <u>component</u> into the ~~fluid~~ <u>liquid</u>, and separating ~~particles~~ <u>antigens</u> that exceed a given particle size, in order to obtain a sample fluid that ~~essentially~~ contains only ~~particles~~ <u>antigens</u> having a given maximum particle size, or

b) providing a <u>second</u> fluid that ~~essentially~~ contains ~~particles~~ <u>antigens</u> having a given maximum particle size and

introducing a second sample component into the ~~fluid~~ liquid that ~~essentially~~ contains ~~particles~~ antigens having a given maximum particle size, in order to obtain a sample ~~fluid~~ that ~~essentially~~ contains ~~particles~~ antigens having a given maximum particle size.

4. (currently amended-withdrawn)   The ~~A~~ method of claim 1 or 2 ~~according to any of the preceding claims~~, wherein the separation of the ~~particles~~ antigens having a size exceeding the given maximum particle size is effected by filtration, the filter having a pore size of preferably 20 - 450 nm, more preferably of 100 - 300 nm, and particularly of 200 nm.

5. (currently amended)   The ~~A~~ method of claim 1 or 2 ~~according to any of the preceding claims~~, wherein antibodies comprise at least one antibody selected from a ~~two~~ monoclonal ~~antibodies~~ antibody and a ~~or one~~ polyclonal antibody ~~are employed as antibodies~~.

6. (currently amended)   The ~~A~~ method of claim 1 or 2 ~~according to any of the preceding claims~~, wherein the antibody is

selected from the group consisting of immunoglobulin G ~~or~~ and immunoglobulin M.

7. (currently amended)   ~~The~~ A method of claim 1 or 2 ~~according to any of the preceding claims~~, wherein the method allows the quantity of ~~particles~~ antigens to be detected quantitatively or semiquantitatively.

8. (currently amended)   ~~The~~ A method of claim 1 or 2 ~~according to any of the preceding claims~~, wherein, at a constant concentration of antibodies, the decrease of the measured signal is directly related to the concentration of antigens.

9. (currently amended-withdrawn)   A computer program product comprising program code means stored in a computer readable medium, for carrying out the method according to ~~any of the~~ claim 1 or 2 ~~to 8~~ when the computer program product is executed on a computer, a network device or a device, particularly an analytical detection device.

10. (currently amended-withdrawn)   A computer program product comprising a program code downloadable from a server, for carrying out the method according to ~~any of the~~ claim 1 or 2 ~~to 8~~ when the computer program product is executed on a

NPGVL1:404572.1-POA-(JTG) 025045-00015

computer, a network device or a device, particularly an analytical detection device.

11. (cancelled)

12. (cancelled)